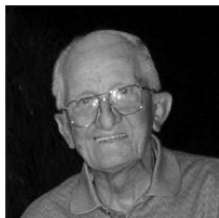


## Lieutenant Colonel Harry Pawlik



Lieutenant Colonel Harry Pawlik USAF (Ret), 86, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family on August 1, 2016 at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville, NC.

Lt. Col. Pawlik was born on December 19, 1929 in the Province of Lower Silesia, Poland. On September 1, 1939, at the age of 9, German Nazi forces invaded Poland, where Harry was captured and separated from his family. Harry never saw his family again and it was later confirmed by the U.S. Army CID and the American Red Cross, that he was the only survivor. Throughout the next four years, Harry was sent to multiple Concentration Camps throughout Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. In the summer of 1944, he boarded a train of cattle cars alongside 600 additional prisoners, headed west. He arrived in Mauthausen and Gusen II, a slave labor camp, where he was held captive and enslaved. The following fall he was shipped to the Western Front in the vicinity of France and Luxembourg. In December of 1944, he was liberated by a Polish detachment with General Patton's 3rd Army and 11th Armored Division and was later adopted by the Military Police, Combat Command A, 11th Armored Division, 3rd Army. Fighting alongside U.S. military forces at the age of 14, during the Battle of the Bulge, he was struck by shrapnel near his left eye but continued to travel until the end of the war. At the time he couldn't speak English, but learned within 3 months and aided as an Allied Forces interpreter. In Steyr, Austria from August 1945 to September 1947 he served as a freedom fighter with the 505th and 796th Military Police.

Harry came quickly to realize that Europe was not for him and aspired to become an American. He started absorbing everything American: movies, lectures, classes, books, and magazines, even comic books. He let it be known he wanted to go to the states, and 15 friends said they would sponsor him. The first person who submitted papers was Lt. Raymond Carpenter from Albemarle, NC.

In July 1947, there were 2.5 million applicants awaiting VISAs to come to the U. S. Harry's connections and powerful recommendations allowed his VISA to be moved to the head of the list. He received approval from the required 6 different countries in less than 2 months. Harry arrived in New York Harbor on September 22, 1947. He set foot on Ellis Island with 2 suitcases and \$120 in his pocket (\$1 for each pound that he weighed). On September 30, 1947 he departed for Albemarle, NC. When Harry arrived in Albemarle he was met by Mrs. Carpenter, her 3 children, some other family members and neighbors from the community.

Harry began school in the 10th grade and worked multiple jobs, including a milk route and as an associate at A&P Food Store and then later at a Drug Store. Just before Harry's senior year in high school the Carpenter family needed to relocate due to Captain Carpenter's reassignment to Fort Bragg. Harry wanted to stay in Albemarle for his senior year. During his time at Albemarle High School, Harry had made a good friend named Bob Barringer. Due to this relationship,

the Barringer family took Harry in as one of their children. The Barringers became Harry's new adopted parents. He graduated from Albemarle High School in 1950.

Harry made a positive impression on many people. One of the most important in his life was an Albemarle Business Man named "Chuck" Daniels who paid for Harry's first year in college. He chose UNC because of the then famous Tar Heel halfback and Heisman Trophy Runner-up Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice. He graduated in 1954 with a Bachelor's of Arts in Science degree.

After graduation, Harry attended Air Force ROTC Summer Camp at Tyndall AFB in Florida and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Force. He went back to UNC to work towards his Master's Degree in Education. He held down 4 jobs to finance this degree. Harry ended up a few courses shy of finishing the degree due to being called in to active service by the U. S. Air Force.

In March 1955, Pawlik departed for USAF pilot training. While serving in the Air Force, Pawlik piloted over 7 different aircraft including the infamous B52 Bomber and the coveted F-105 Thunderchief.

In November of 1966, he received orders to Korat RTAFB as part of the 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron where the unit was expected to fly 100 missions. On February 20, 1967 he was promoted to Major.

On August 6, 1967 Pawlik flew his 100th and 101st missions in Vietnam. In 1972, Pawlik attended the prestigious Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He graduated the following year with his Master's Degree in Military History and Political Science and was assigned orders to RAFB Upper Heyford, England where he was the Commander of the 79th Fighter Squadron. In 1977 he received his second Master's Degree in Business Administration from Webster University in St. Louis, MO. In 1980, Lt. Col. Pawlik retired from the [United States Air Force](#) and was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal by Arizona Senator and 1964 Republican Presidential Candidate, Barry Goldwater.

Throughout Lt. Col. Pawlik's career he flew 101 missions over North Vietnam, 21 missions over Laos, 33 missions in Route Pack Six, 12 of which were "Wild Weasel" missions and absorbed enemy fire on 7, one of which, his aircraft was struck by enemy fire over 130 times. Route Pack six was recognized as one of the most dangerous sections of North Vietnam.

Lt. Col. Pawlik received countless awards and commendations including; The Silver Star, 7 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 2 [Purple Hearts](#), Meritorious Service Medal, 15 Air Medals, The Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palms in addition to 28 other awards and commendations.

In 1970, the Daughters of the American Revolution requested the honor of Lt. Col. Pawlik to present a brief speech to newly naturalized citizens. The title of the speech was "The Privilege of Being an American." His presentation was so impressive that Congressman Walter S. Baring, from Nevada, read his speech in to the Congressional Record which

instantly became etched in American History and is now a part of the National Archives in Washington, DC.

Lt. Col. Pawlik retired to Greenville, NC, married, and "adopted" his eldest step-daughter Gwen. In 1987, he had his first, and only child, Elizabeth. Harry was an avid golfer, participated in numerous VA tournaments throughout the United States and could often be seen on the links of Brook Valley Country Club sharpening his craft with his young infant daughter in tow. Harry was a survivor, a decorated veteran, and the truest definition of an American Hero. His life will be remembered and his legacy shall remain for generations to come.

Lt. Col. Pawlik is survived by his daughter Elizabeth Pawlik of Winterville, NC, step-daughter Gwendolyn Mitchell and husband Neil of Cocoa Beach, FL. Granddaughter, Kayden Taylor of Winterville, NC and step-grandchildren Alexander, Elise, Cheyenne and Charlotte Mitchell, all of Cocoa Beach, FL. The mother of his daughters, Muriel Raker, of Hampstead, NC.; Foster brother, Bob Barringer and wife Kim McQueen, of Asheville, NC; foster sisters Rayceine Reardeon of MS, Delores Schmidt of VA and Dawn Carpenter of CA and numerous friends and family throughout the world. He is preceded in death by his foster parents, Anne and Howard Barringer of Albemarle, NC and foster parents Verdie and Raymond Carpenter.

Visitation will be held on August 3rd, 2016 at Wilkerson Funeral from 6-8pm. Funeral Services will be held on August 4th, 2016 at 4pm at Wilkerson Funeral Home and will be officiated by Reverend Raymond Hoggard. Burial services will be held at Arlington National Cemetery at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association ([www.river-rats.org](http://www.river-rats.org)) in Honor of Lieutenant Colonel Harry Pawlik.

## **Funeral Home**

### **Wilkerson Funeral Home and Crematory**

2100 East Fifth Street Greenville, NC 27858  
(252) 752-2101

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